but the country was a *cul de sac* and unfavourable to an advance. Nevertheless, they gained invaluable experience. *They were inclined to think that an attack, prepared in a certain way, had now a very good chance of succeeding."*

M. Thomas, while not rejecting my proposal, urged

" that it must be examined to the bottom *(au fond)* particularly in regard to the question of dates and the equilibrium of force on the different fronts."

M. Briand again pressed the contention as to the deterioration in the quality of the German Army. He said

" *there was considerable difference between the character of the enemy's troops now and in the early part of the War.*

Formerly, all the enemy troops consisted of Poor quality troupes de choc *but now only a portion of troops™™ the enemy's forces could be regarded as* troupes de choc. *Hence, in most parts of the line we should find rather mediocre troops opposed to us. That is how he envisaged the strategical situation of the enemy. He did not dismiss my proposal but only urged that it required careful examination"*

The Russian Ambassador pointed out that it was very important to secure concerted plans. He considered my proposal a very seductive one.

Baron Sonnino said that there were two ways of presenting the problem for examination :—

1. On the basis that the Italian forces

required
material support only ; and
2. On the basis that they required troops in
addition.